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CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT PROGRAM

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Illinois Department of Public Aid

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Title IV-D of the Social Security Act requires that all states have an effective child support enforcement program. The official child support agency for the State of Illinois is the Bureau of Child Support of the Department of Public Aid.

SERVICES AVAILABLE

Through the Bureau of Child Support the State of Illinois provides a parent location service which searches state and federal records in an attempt to locate an absent parent whose whereabouts are unknown. In conjunction with law enforcement officials and the court system, the Bureau of Child Support offers a child support enforcement service which:

1) Establishes the paternity of children born out of wedlock;
2) Obtains court orders for child support; and
3) Refers parents who are delinquent in their child support payments to the courts for legal enforcement.

AFDC APPLICANTS AND RECIPIENTS

If you are applying for or receiving Aid to Families with Dependent Children because the children have been deserted or abandoned by one or both parents, you are required to cooperate with the Illinois Department of Public Aid's Child Support Enforcement Program. Under State law, by your application for or receipt of assistance, you automatically assign your rights to support for yourself and your children to the Department. This means that the Department of Public Aid has the right to any support money you might receive from an absent parent of the children for whom you are applying or receiving assistance. As a condition of your eligibility for assistance (but not the children's eligibility) you must cooperate with the Department of Public Aid in:

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1) Identifying and locating the absent parent(s) of the child(ren),
2) Establishing the paternity of a child born out of wedlock,
3) Mailing child support which you receive from an absent parent to the Department, and
4) Obtaining child support payments or any other payments or property for any person applying for AFDC.

You must cooperate with the family support specialist, your caseworker and any other representative of the child support program. If you are requested to obtain blood tests or to appear in court, your cooperation is a condition of your own eligibility for AFDC. If, for a good reason, you cannot keep your appointment, you must call the family support specialist before your appointment so other arrangements can be made.

CLAIM FOR EXEMPTION FROM COOPERATION IN OBTAINING CHILD SUPPORT

While it does not affect your children's eligibility, your decision to cooperate with the Child Support Enforcement Program directly affects any benefits for which you personally may be eligible. If you have failed or refused to cooperate, you will find that your own needs have not been included in the assistance grant you receive for your children.

According to a recent federal law, if you can show that you did not cooperate with the Child Support Enforcement Program for a good cause, you will not be penalized. However, you are required to provide the Department of Public Aid with the evidence necessary to prove why you cannot cooperate. Or you must present sufficient information to help the Department investigate your situation. This information might include the absent parent's name and address, or other pertinent facts. Upon request, your local public aid office will assist you in obtaining the necessary evidence.

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Then the Department will decide whethe or not there has been good cause for you non-cooperation. This decision will be made on the basis of evidence you supply, investigation of information you provide, or a combination of both.

You will not have to cooperate in establishing paternity or obtaining support payments fo your children if:

1) your cooperation might possibly result in: physical or emotional harm to the children, or
physical or emotional harm to you, which might reduce your ability to care for the children.
2) The child involved was conceived as a result of forcible rape or incest,

CAUSE FOR EXEMPTION
Physical or emotional harm to the child or caretaker relative
Conceived as a result of forcible rape or incest
Adoption proceedings pending
Counseling regarding adoption

3) Adoption proceedings in court are pending, or
4) You are currently being counseled by a public or licensed social agency to decide whether or not you should keep your children. This counseling must not last more than three months.

The above information will be weighed to determine whether your cooperation would be detrimental to the children.

	EVIDENCE
	Court, medical, criminal, child protective services, psychological, or law enforcement records which indicate that the absent parent might inflict physical or emotional harm on the child or you; Medical records which include the emotional health history and present emotional health of the child or you; or Written diagnosis or prognosis from a mental health professional indicating the emotional health of the child or you.
	Birth certificates, medical or enforcement records which indicate the child was conceived as a result of forcible rape or incest.
	Court documents or other records to indicate legal adoption procedures are pending.
	Written statement from public or licensed private social agency.

If you do not qualify for an exemption, you must cooperate with the program to remain eligible. The Bureau of Child Support may review the basis for exempting you from cooperation. Then the Bureau may participate in fair hearings concerning the exemption issue.

EVIDENCE

The federal government has set certain standards for establishing good cause for noncooperation. Refer to the chart at the left for a listing of evidence which does not require further investigation by the Department.

COST OF CHILD SUPPORT LOCATION AND ENFORCEMENT SERVICES

If you are an AFDC recipient, all of these services are provided at no cost. If you are not a public assistance recipient, these services are

available. A reasonable fee which is determined by your gross income and family size may be charged. Contact your local public aid office if you desire these services.

If you receive child support from an absent parent for a child applying for or receiving AFDC, you will receive a reporting form during the application process and thereafter as necessary. On this form you are to indicate the amount of support received, whom it was from and which child(ren) it was for. You mail the form and **all** the support received from the absent parent to: **Direct Pay Support Services, P.O. Box 909, Springfield, Illinois 62705.** *Endorse all checks and money orders to/or make them payable to: ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC AID. Do not send cash. If you do not report and send this support promptly and accurately, your caseworker will be notified and your AFDC grant may be cancelled.*

The Illinois Department of Public Aid does not discriminate in admission to, or treatment or employment in programs or activities in compliance with the Illinois Human Rights Act, the Illinois Constitution, the U.S. Civil Rights Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, as amended, and the U.S. Constitution.

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